

'...those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.' Isaiah 40:31



Wellbeing Dog in School Policy

St Laurence in Thanet Church of England Junior Academy

(Multi Academy Trust Policy)



Our school offers a supportive, inclusive, nurturing and inspiring learning environment where each member is known by God, loved and empowered to reach their full potential. Children are encouraged through an aspirational and engaging curriculum to develop their knowledge, skills and character so that they can truly flourish, both now and into the future.

This set of values is reflected in all our policies.

Joy Hope Forgiveness Love Resilience

Date Adopted by the
Governors: 12th October
2022

Date of Review: 3rd October
202

Approved by: S Graham

Date: 4th October 2022

Date of Next Review: October 2025

Introduction

Children and adults can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills, through contact with a suitable, calm dog. In addition to these benefits, children and adults take great enjoyment from interaction with animals.

Animals in school have been shown to reduce anxiety in some children who may find school challenging - researchers report that students can identify with and feel grounded by animals, and that having a dog in school can promote further positive behaviour across the school, including children showing more confidence and responsibility. With the presence of a calm and well-trained dog, children find social support and peer interaction.

Reading programmes with dogs have been shown to be highly beneficial for some children. Children who may be embarrassed to read aloud to the class or even adults are more likely to read to a dog - a dog won't judge or correct. Dogs are happy to have children read to them, or to join a group of children in the library whilst they are having a book reading session.

Dogs give unconditional acceptance, as they are non-judgmental, which is especially crucial to struggling readers who may lack confidence. Research has shown that children who read to dogs show an increase in reading levels, word recognition, a higher desire to read and write, and an increase in social skills when mixing with other children.

Dogs in school offer an opportunity for improving social development. They are especially useful for teaching children social skills and responsibility. Specifically, schools are using dogs to help children build self-esteem; learn about positive and negative reinforcement, responsibility, and boundaries.

Is there a risk in bringing a dog into a school environment?

This policy shows that we have thought carefully about school life with a dog and how, through careful management, there is a very low risk of harm.

General Points:

The dog will be owned by Mrs Allison Shepherd. The dog is a Cockerpoo, chosen for its very mild temperament. The school has taken all reasonable steps to advise stakeholders of the school dog and to mitigate any risks, including full communication with stakeholders. Information about the school dog will form part of the school's recruitment practice for any potential members of staff.

A dedicated risk assessment has been produced which will be reviewed annually. The dog will be fully vaccinated and kept in good health, under the care of *Eagle Vets, 75A High St, Minster, Ramsgate, CT12 4AB*. The dog is fully insured with *Pet Protect* but will not be allowed into school. The school dog will have a permanent base, in addition to moving around the school, which will be the FLOs Office.

Contact with the School Dog:

Staff, visitors and children known to have allergic reactions to dogs must not go near the dog. Parents will be asked to advise if their child does not desire contact with the dog for health/emotional reasons. The school will ensure that such students have no direct, school initiated contact with the dog. This does not include visits to classrooms by the dog on learning walks or walking around site during the day.

The dog will be kept on a lead when moving between classrooms or on a walk, and will be under the full control and supervision of an adult. Children will never be left alone with the dog and there will be appropriate adult supervision at all times when the dog is present with children.

Child and Adult Conduct with the Dog:

Children and adults will be reminded of what is appropriate behaviour around the dog during the school day. It is made clear that instructions given by the adult handler must be listened to at all times. The handler will decide how many children/adults can be with the dog at any one time. Children and adults should remain calm around the dog at all times and anyone with known medical/allergies must not go near the dog.

Children and adults must not:

- make sudden movements or loud noises
- stare into a dog's eyes
- put their face near to the dog and should always approach it standing up
- disturb the dog if it is sleeping or eating
- never play too roughly with the dog
- feed, or eat close to the dog at any time

Children and adults not abiding by the above do so at their own risk. Any deliberate attempt to harm the school dog is a serious matter and will result in exclusion/ staff disciplinary measure.

Health and Safety

Children and adults will always wash their hands or use hand sanitiser after handling the dog. Any dog excrement will be cleared up immediately and disposed of appropriately by the adult in charge of the dog at the time. Children must never be allowed to do this.

Should a bite occur (even playfully):

- 1) Parents will be contacted immediately.
- 2) The wound will be cleaned and covered with a sterile, non-sticky dressing.
- 3) The child/adult will be released for medical attention.
- 4) All staff will be informed.
- 5) A full investigation will take place.
- 6) The suitability of having a dog will be reassessed by the Headteacher